

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ISO-00 AID-20 EB-11 L-03 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 OMB-01 COME-00 AF-10 ARA-16 EUR-25

NEA-10 TRSE-00 OIC-04 PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01 DRC-01

/158 W

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R 250842Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7684

UNCLAS BANGKOK 16603

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AORG:ECAFE:RED

SUBJ: ECAFE:RATIONALIZATION PROJECT

1. SUMMARY: EXECUTIVE SECRETARY MARAMIS AND HIS DEPUTY MET OCT. 19 WITH INFORMAL GROUP PLUS MALAYSIA AND SRI LANKA REPS. TO DISCUSS ECAFE SECRETARIAT'S DRAFT ENTITLED "CONFERENCE STRUCTURE". SUFFICIENT CRITICISMS WERE VOICED TO REQUIRE DRASTIC REDRAFTING. FINAL VERSION WILL BE POUCHED ON RECEIPT. END SUMMARY.

2. SECRETARIAT'S DRAFT AND SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSION INDICATED THREE TROUBLESOME AREAS: A) THE ADDITION OF A NEW LEGISLATIVE BODY OR COMMITTEE AT THE SECOND LEVEL ENTITLED "SHIPPING, INCLUDING PORT DEVELOPMENT, FREIGHT RATES AND CONTAINERIZATION"; B) THE POSSIBILITY OF UNLIMITED MEETINGS OF AD HOC INTERGOVERNMENTAL/ EXPERT GROUPS AT THE THIRD LEVEL AND C) STATUS OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS FOR ASIAN ECONOMIC COOPERATION EQUAL TO THE ECAFE COMMISSION.

3. THE NETHERLANDS REP STRONGLY OBJECTED, WITH OUR SUPPORT, TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ADDITIONAL LEGISLATIVE BODY FOR SHIPPING AND WARNED THAT THIS WOULD OPEN THE DOOR TO OTHER REQUESTS FOR COMMITTEES ON ENVIRONMENT, FISHING OR EVEN TECHNICAL ADUCATION.

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THE SRI LANKA REP, HOWEVER, KEPT PRESSING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT

OF A COMMITTEE ON INVISIBLES INCLUDING INSURANCE.

4. THE SECRETARIAT PAPER PROVIDED FOR 12 DAYS FOR COMMISSION MEETINGS, 10 DAYS FOR PERMREPS AND OTHER UN BODY MEETINGS AND 60 DAYS FOR LEGISLATIVE BODY MEETINGS THUS TOTALING 82 DAYS. THE REMAINING 98 MEETING DAYS WOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR AD HOC GROUP MEETINGS AND, ASSUMING 5 DAYS PER MEETING, THIS WOULD PROVIDE 18-19 MEETINGS ANNUALLY. SECRETARIAT OFFICIALS REVEALED LATER IN THE DISCUSSIONS THAT THEY REALLY ENVISAGED AN UNLIMITED NUMBER OF MEETINGS FOR AD HOC GROUPS. THIS ISSUE REMAINED UNRESOLVED AFTER SEVERAL PERMREPS QUESTIONED WHETHER THIS WAS THE PROPER WAY TO RATIONALIZE ECAFE MEETINGS.

5. SECRETARIAT DRAFT CHART HAD A SOLID INSTEAD OF DOTTED LINE LINKING THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS WITH THE COMMISSION. DISCUSSION REVEALED THAT THIS WAS DONE DELIBERATELY BECAUSE THE SECRETARIAT WANTED THE COUNCIL TO HAVE EQUAL STATUS DESPITE THE FACT IT IS A NON-UN BODY. THERE WAS NO RESPONSE TO OUR REMINDER THAT SEVERAL YEARS AGO THE COUNCIL HAD SET UP 12 TASK FORCES WHICH REQUIRED EXTENSIVE SECRETARIAT SUPPORT DESPITE FACT THAT SUCH WORK IS NOT CONTAINED IN THE WORK PROGRAM.

6. NETHERLANDS' REP INSISTED THAT DURING THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD THE PRESENT SUBSIDIARY BODIES SHOULD CEASE TO EXIST AS STANDING BODIES AND BE REPLACED BY AD HOC ONES. DEPUTY MENON PROMISED TO EXCLUDE SUBSIDIARY BODIES FROM THE CALENDAR GOING TO THE COMMISSION NEXT YEAR, PROVIDED "WE GET CLEAR ADVICE FROM PERMREPS AT THE OFFICIAL MEETING IN EARLY DECEMBER REGARDING THE NEW CONFERENCE STRUCTURE".

7. WE HAVE SINCE LEARNED THAT MARAMIS MAY HAVE SCRATCHED THE SHIPPING COMMITTEE IDEA AND ORDERED A DRASTIC REVISION OF THE SECRETARIAT'S DRAFT. WE SHALL SEE. WE RECALL SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS THREE YEARS AGO TO AVOID ENGAGING DIRECTLY IN DISCUSSIONS ABOUT ESTABLISHING SPECIAL ECAFE SHIPPING COMMITTEE. UNLESS OTHERWISE INSTRUCTED, WE SHALL CONTINUE TO LET OTHERS TAKE THE LEAD.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 OCT 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973BANGKO16603
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731013/aaaaajfl.tel
Line Count: 98
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: martinjw
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 DEC 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06-Dec-2001 by bryansd0>; APPROVED <07 FEB 2002 by martinjw>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ECAFE:RATIONALIZATION PROJECT
TAGS: AORG, TH, ECAFE
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005